

## Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, February 19, 1879, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL 292 Essex Street, Salem.  
Wednesday, Feb. 19, 1879. My sweet darling wife:

I would have sent you a telegram tonight had I been able to find twenty-five cents to send it with. But no, my pockets refuse to disgorge more than eleven cents — and you must wait till tomorrow for news. How did you enjoy the Reception? How did your wedding-dress fit? Send me a nice long letter, there's a darling — a gossip letter — a regular women's letter — with all the latest news about yourself, Elsie — and every one else.

My train did not reach Jersey City till nearly eight o'clock — so that I lost my connection to Boston. Having nearly three hours to spare — I called upon your Grandpapa and Auntie Berta — and Master Charles. Poor little baby, he seemed so frail that I felt afraid to touch him for fear he would fall to pieces. A lovely child I call him — with such sweet blue eyes and curly hair — but I don't like his old-fashioned look. I want to see him laugh and squeal like our little baby. It makes me feel and to see him so grave and quiet. I took him in my arms and he was so light . I dared not jump him as we do our Elsie — but had to hold him as carefully and tenderly as if he had been made of fragile china. Poor little fellow — I hope he will grow up — but he seems to me too fragile to last.

Mr. McCurdy seemed well — but I realize how very much he has changed since your Grandmamma's death. Auntie Berta seems well and bright as usual. She and your mother always seem to be overflowing with sunshine. Oh! dear me! Can I ever learn to copy your dear dear Mamma! I wish I could be of some comfort to her and to you all — and I mean to be if I can. She has shown me and made me realize as I never did before — how much comfort and happiness can be caused — by a 2 cheerful heart and a bright smile. When next I get into the depths of despair — I will look at my face in a glass — and mould my

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features into a smile — and try my hardest to deceive myself and every one else into the belief that I am as happy as happy can be — if only as a matter of policy. Happiness is contagious — and the simulation of it — may not only influence others — but re-act upon the actor himself through the medium of those he has influenced — and through the medium of mental and muscular association. If a man feels deeply he can hardly avoid showing his emotion somewhat upon his countenance. And if he assumes artificially the expression of some deep emotion — he can hardly help feeling slightly the emotion itself. Be angry and you frown. Frown and you feel ugly. And I think that smiles and a bright face and pleasant words — must re-ad upon a man's interior — and tend to produce or at least help the production of — cheerfulness and happiness itself. “Them's my sentiments!”

I spent yesterday evening with your Aunt Carrie and this morning with a bad headache. In the middle of the day I went to the Institute of Technology to see if we could measure the resistance of the pieces of selenium I brought with me.

The resistance proved too high however for their instruments. They could measure up to one million ohms — but the resistance of the selenium was ever so much higher than that.

I see there are great practical difficulties in the way of the “Photophone” but still I believe in the feasibility of talking by light — and shall persevere. I have come to Salem in the hope that I may be able to induce Mr. Sanders to co-operate with me concerning Mr. Hubbard — 3 I think that he is coming round. At all events I have made him see that it will be impossible for me to accept the Presidency — and that there is no one else in the Company — excepting Mr. Hubbard — whose name is known outside of Boston. I have also let him clearly understand that I will no longer be associated with the Company — if Mr. Hubbard is thrown out of the Presidency.

A crisis has come. I feel that all are friendly to me and that I must try to form oil upon the troubled waters. I shall make one great attempt and if unsuccessful — I shall really retire — disgusted — to my old work.

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My plan is this. I shall ask to have a special meeting of the Directors, called for Monday — (so as to give me plenty of time).

I will write out my thoughts and present them to the Directors on Monday — and then let them take what action they please.

In the meantime I shall see each man separately — and have a full and free conversation with all — and write up the subjects. I am perfectly determined not to be forced into the false position of President — and to leave the Company's service if Mr. Hubbard's resignation is accepted without any charges having been made against him — and without giving him an opportunity of defending himself.

I shall advocate a moderate course. Send me any thoughts upon the subject. I want to state to these gentlemen. (1) Reasons why I could under no circumstances accept the Presidency. (2) Reasons why it, would be unwise and fatal to the best interests of the Company to remove Mr. Hubbard from its head. (3) Reasons why the Company would be ungrateful and unjust to him in doing so. I want to show them that they have no man in the Company to take his place — and that I will resent indignity to him by leaving the Company myself.

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I think it is worth while waiting here a few days and make a great attempt. I shall ask Bradley and Sanders to call a meeting of the Directors for Monday to hear a communication from A. Graham Bell upon the affairs of the Company. Send me by return any thoughts upon the subject.

With much love.

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Your own, Alec. P. S. I forgot to mention Lina. I saw her also in New York. I thought you wanted to invite her to visit you? I won't forget your Cousin Mary.